

# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

Jerome Township Board of Trustees

Meeting

Public Hearing

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

Held

April 18, 2023

20

**Case #PD22-002  
aka Courtyards on Ryan Parkway  
Application for a Zoning Amendment**

The Board of Township Trustees of Jerome Township, Union County, Ohio met in special session on April 18, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. for a public hearing. Board Chairman Wezlynn Davis called the meeting to order. Megan Sloat, Barry Adler and Wezlynn Davis answered the roll call. Also in attendance were Robert Caldwell (Fiscal Officer), Eric Snowden (Zoning Inspector/Coordinator), Brandon Standley (Township Administrator), Julie Donnan (Brosius, Johnson & Griggs), Tom Hart representing the applicant and members of the public.

The Jerome Township Board of Trustees opened the public hearing by swearing in those who wished to speak. The application, submitted by Epcon Communities, requests a zoning amendment from Rural Residential District (RU) to Planned Development District (PD)(application PD22-002) be granted for approximately 33.08+/- acres. This property is identified as parcel numbers 1700120460000, 1700120430000, and 1700120331000 and is located at 8400 Ryan Parkway, Plain City, Ohio.

Township Staff Report

Mr. Snowden presented to the Board the Zoning Department Staff Report. He indicated that the applicant is requesting the review and approval of an application to amend the official zoning map. Mr. Snowden addressed the following from the Staff Report:

- Site location and context – the site currently consists of a single-family dwelling and agriculture with neighboring uses of single-family dwellings
- Basis of review and approval – Section 230.001 and Section 500.08 of the Zoning Resolution
- Intent of zoning districts – Section 500.001 of the Zoning Resolution
- Land use plan – identifies this area as conservation development where residential dwellings are clustered and have varied density and lot sizes, open space should not be less than 40% and the dwellings per acre can range between one and two units per gross acre
- Transportation infrastructure – per the requirements of the application process for map amendment, the applicant has provided a traffic study/review for the site, which will be subject to review and approval by the Union County Engineer's Office
- Regional planning commission review by the Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission – recommending denial of the application providing a staff report and written recommendations citing the density of 3.35 and open space of 32.35%. It was noted that since that review, the application was revised to provide for 40% open space and a reduction in units from 111 to 94 thus decreasing the density to 2.84 units per acre.
- Zoning Commission review – recommending approval with modifications
- Staff review and recommendation – recommending approval with modifications

Applicant Presentation

Tom Hart of Epcon Homes & Communities addressed the Board. He indicated the development will consist of patio or courtyard homes similar to the two adjacent sites. The homes will house 1.5 to 1.7 people per unit versus the typical single-family home of three. He noted the increase in property tax based with fewer children results in a tax benefit. He also noted this type of community has 60% less traffic than a conventional development. The community will consist of private streets to be maintained by residents. He added this community serves to address the demand for senior housing in the area. In response to neighbors, the applicant increased buffers to the east and west, provided for side verses rear patios of some units, made a commitment to look at screening, and moved the clubhouse to the interior of the site. He asked the Board to consider the lower impact of this proposed plan.

Board of Trustee Questions/Comments

Barry Adler asked about existing woodlands on the parcel. Mr. Hart noted there are trees around the periphery and efforts will be made to maintain some of the existing trees to the west. As part of this discussion Mr. Snowden noted the difference between conservation verses preservation. Mr. Hart stated they will be hiring a professional arborist to assist with looking at the trees to the west. Mr. Adler asked about the side verses rear courtyard homes. The applicate provided drawings of the two different styles reiterating the commitment to only allow side courtyards on lots that will back up to existing homes in the neighboring community. Mr. Alder asked about parking. The applicant indicted that parking will be permitted on one side, the non-hydrant side, of the street. Mr. Adler asked about mailboxes. The applicate reviewed the site plan indicating the locations of the clustered boxes noting that the County Engineer and the Postal Service have the final say in where they are located. The applicant noted that side walks will only exist on one side of the street. Mr. Adler asked about the existence of any wetlands. The applicant indicated that none have currently be verified but if the project moves forward they would be verified and addressed with the Army Corp of Engineers.

Wezlynn Davis emphasized what could happen if the property were to be developed with traditional single-family homes. The property owner could chose to propose this option which would have a greater impact on traffic and schools and she was focusing on the lowest impact to the surrounding area.

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Public Comment

William Wainnigh addressed the Board making reference to an agreement some homeowners to the west had entered into with the developer to protect the western border. He noted changes the developer has made to the project including side courtyards, storm drainage, and no two story homes and indicated his support of the proposal.

Kathy Hjelm stated she is the owner of the property zoned residential and agricultural which is not the highest and best use of the land. She stated she feels the Epcon proposal is the best based on the items previously stated including a lower density than neighbors, lower impact on the community, larger buffers, maintains the land sue requirements, and includes age restrictions. She noted this land was never a nature preserve.

Julie Johnson expressed concerns over the current drainage of the area. It was noted that this would undergo review by the Union County Engineer where existing drainage issues could be addressed.

Juanita Griffith complained to the Board regarding issues she had with the developer over her own home citing issues with flooring, levels of moisture in the foundation, and the upkeep of undeveloped areas of the property. It was noted by Julie Donnan that these are not things the Trustees can take into consideration in their decision. It was also noted that a home-owners association would be responsible for the upkeep of common areas.

Joseph Zaluski suggested Union County should purchase the property for a park. Wezlynn Davis replied they County is working on a number of road improvement projects they are seeking funding for and therefore the likelihood of moneys for park expansion is low.

Michelle Miller asked the Board to consider the impact of traffic and the existing sewer issues in the area.

Board of Trustee Questions/Comments

Barry Adler noted he had a number of concerns with the project. He questioned if the plan was consistent with the zoning resolution. Wezlynn Davis replied that while the numbers are higher, the impact on the area is lower due to the type of proposed development and neighboring development. Megan Sloat emphasized the developer decreased the density and increased the open space so that it meets the requirements.

Megan Sloat stated she has conducted a thorough review and has meet with Eric Snowden emphasizing these decisions are important and impactful.

Board of Trustee Action

At 9:30 p.m. it was moved by Wezlynn Davis and seconded by Barry Adler that the Board of Township Trustees of Jerome Township adopt the following motion:

The Jerome Township Board of Trustees close the hearing in Case Number PD22-002. The Board will take all this information under advisement and plan to render a decision in Case Number PD22-002 within twenty days at the next regular meeting held on May 3, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Hall. Because the hearing is now closed, the Board will not take additional information or public comment either at the next regular meeting or between now and that meeting. On Wednesday, May 3, 2023 the action with respect to this case will be the Board making its decision; there will be no additional applicant information or public comments taken on this case at that time.

Wezlynn Davis, Chairman

Robert Caldwell, Fiscal Officer